



## ***McKinley Classical Junior Academy***



***District: St. Louis Public School District***

***Enrollment: 395***

***Grade Range: 6-8***

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*The purpose of McKinley Classical Junior Academy is to provide a challenging educational experience for gifted and talented students that is accelerated and enriched beyond the normal mandated curriculum. The mission is to provide a culturally diverse educational program for all students, a teaching and learning atmosphere where the student is encouraged to grow intellectually as well as personally, and a child-school-parent support system that improves cooperation between family and school.*

McKinley Classical Junior Academy, a gifted and talented magnet middle school, is located in south central St. Louis City. The selection process for students who attend McKinley CJA is based on individual intelligence tests and the state's criteria for gifted students. The resulting group of students is culturally diverse; about 54 percent of students are African American, 42 percent are Caucasian, and the remaining four percent are American Indian, Hispanic, and Asian.

### ***Programs Tailored for Gifted and Talented Students***

McKinley Classical Junior Academy blends current research about educating the middle level child with knowledge of educating gifted and talented children to create a challenging yet nurturing environment for its students. The curriculum at McKinley CJA is accelerated at least one full year beyond the standard curriculum. Students receive instruction in the core areas of language arts, science, social studies and mathematics, as well as world language, computers, family and consumer science, industrial technology, vocal and instrumental music, and visual arts. A five-day rotating schedule accommodates this variety of subject matter.

All children, including those who are academically gifted, learn in different ways. Teachers employ instructional methods such as compacting, graphic organizing, and scaffolding that are designed specifically for use with gifted students. Content areas are integrated through the use of interdisciplinary research projects. Research in the natural sciences produces a project which integrates science and mathematics. Social studies and language arts collaborate on a research project in the social sciences. Field experiences and on-site enrichment activities are planned throughout the year to integrate various themes and content areas.

McKinley CJA is organized into small teams of students and teachers to support the intellectual, psychological, and emotional development of the adolescent. Likewise, the academic schedule has been revised over the past ten years to accommodate the integration of affective, cognitive and psychomotor needs of the middle level student.

### ***Culture Supported by the National Network of Educational Renewal***

The culture of McKinley CJA is characterized by its belief in the tenets of democratic schools. As a partner school in the National Network of Educational Renewal, McKinley CJA seeks to foster in the nation's

### ***“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”***

- ***Classical Junior Academy League*** – CJA League is a leadership and service organization devoted to the development of character of its members and service to CJA students and others. Selection of students is based on service, leadership, character, and citizenship.
- ***World Language Curriculum*** – World language students are taught new vocabulary, dialogues, and children’s literature; they then create children’s stories in the respective foreign language.
- ***Mentors for New Teachers*** – A partnership between the University of Missouri, Harris Stowe State College, Webster University, and the St. Louis Public Schools provides retired teachers to serve as mentor/coaches to new teachers.

young the skills, dispositions, and knowledge necessary for effective participation in a social and political democracy; ensure that the young have access to those understandings and skills required for satisfying and responsible lives; develop educators who nurture the learning and well-being of every student; and ensure educators’ competence in and commitment to serving as stewards of the school.

In this culture, democracy begins with the attitude of the lead administrator and filters to the staff and students. McKinley’s culture is student-centered and focused on a commitment to high standards for all students. Teachers, administrators, team leaders, department heads, and parents form a cooperative partnership committed to improving educational opportunities for students.

### ***“WORDS OF WISDOM”***

- ***“Homogeneity is considered the antithesis of quality programming for gifted adolescents.”***
- ***“A well-educated, literate and achievement-oriented populace is an improvement for all communities. An understanding of the school and its goals aids the community in the planning of activities and in the use of community resources that will benefit all that are involved in our schools.”***
- ***“We believed that every child was important long before we believed no child should be left behind.”***

### ***Character Education to Promote Personal Growth***

Students’ personal and intellectual growth toward becoming a responsible citizen is paramount to McKinley CJA’s program. A character education program includes four components centered on these goals:

1. ***Advisory Program*** – Each McKinley CJA student is assigned to an advisory class, which meets daily for the purpose of taking attendance and conducting other school business. Twice a week, during a full class-length advisory period, students and teachers discuss topics that pertain to the challenges which arise during the transition from elementary to middle school and beyond.
2. ***Personal Growth and Responsibility Curriculum*** – Personal growth is incorporated into the social studies curriculum, focusing on social responsibility, peer pressure and other adolescent issues in sixth grade, and on human sexuality, drug awareness and AIDS awareness in seventh and eighth grades.
3. ***Leisure Time Activity Period*** – A weekly activity period is an opportunity for students to explore leisure time pursuits, allowing 100% of McKinley CJA students to participate in at least one extracurricular activity.
4. ***Career Education*** – Career education curriculum encompasses all the experiences that help students make reasonable life decisions and learn how to understand themselves, their potential, and their relationship to the world of work. Activities include eighth grade college and university visits and the Career Awareness Fair.

*McKinley Classical Junior Academy’s mission of acceleration and enrichment reflect the school community’s ongoing commitment to high standards for all students. Caring faculty and staff strive daily to meet the special needs of their gifted and talented student population.*